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Folding Arms While Standing in Salat

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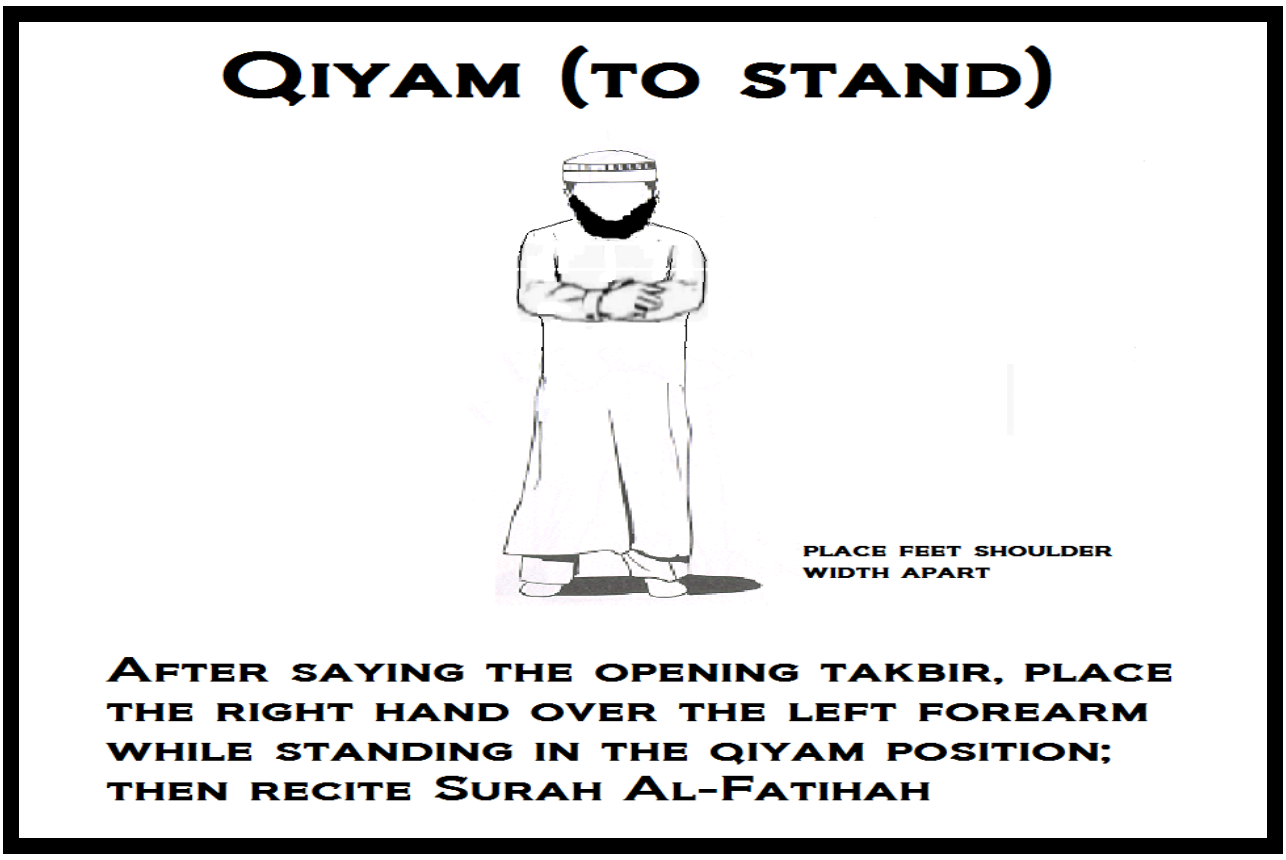
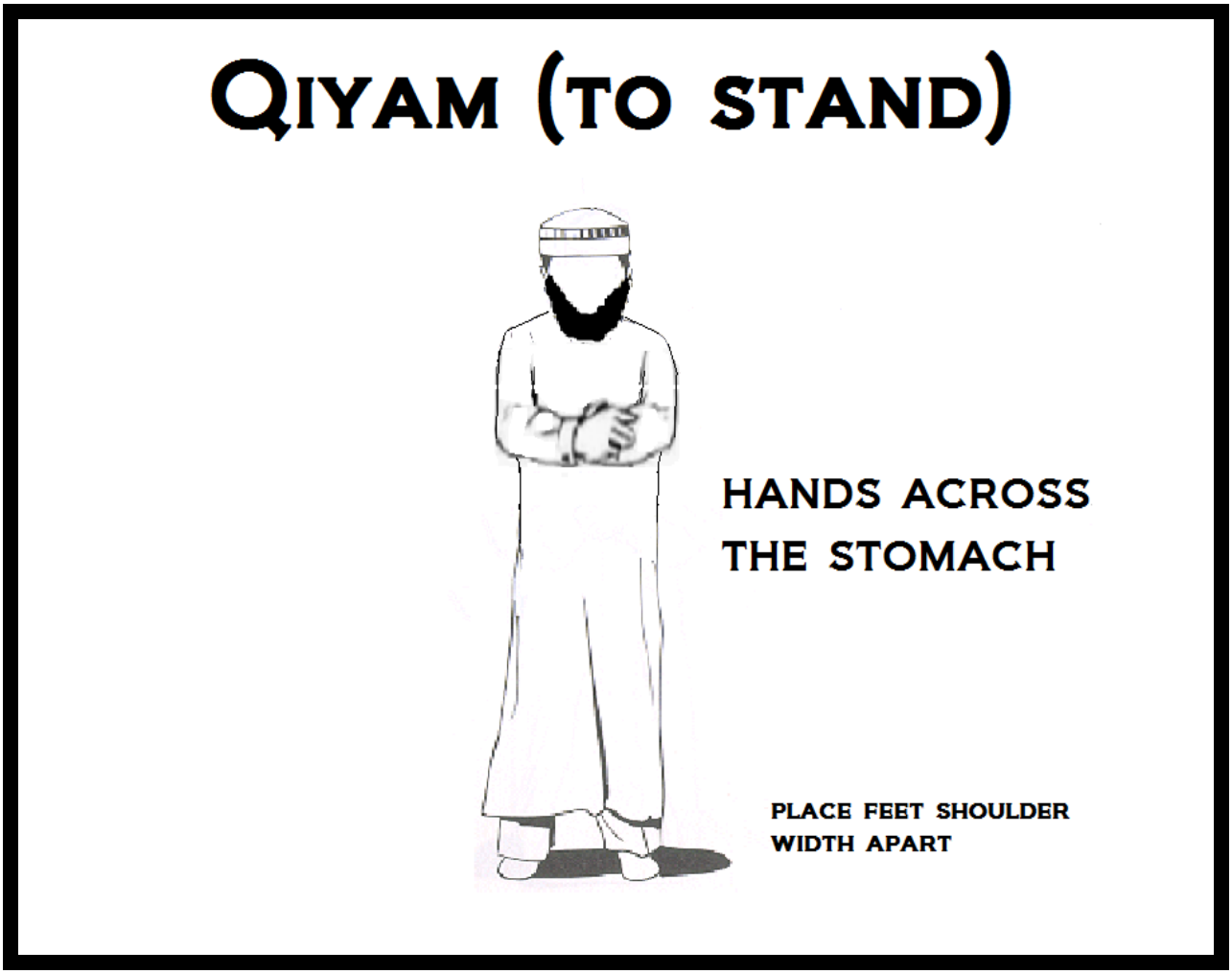
In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

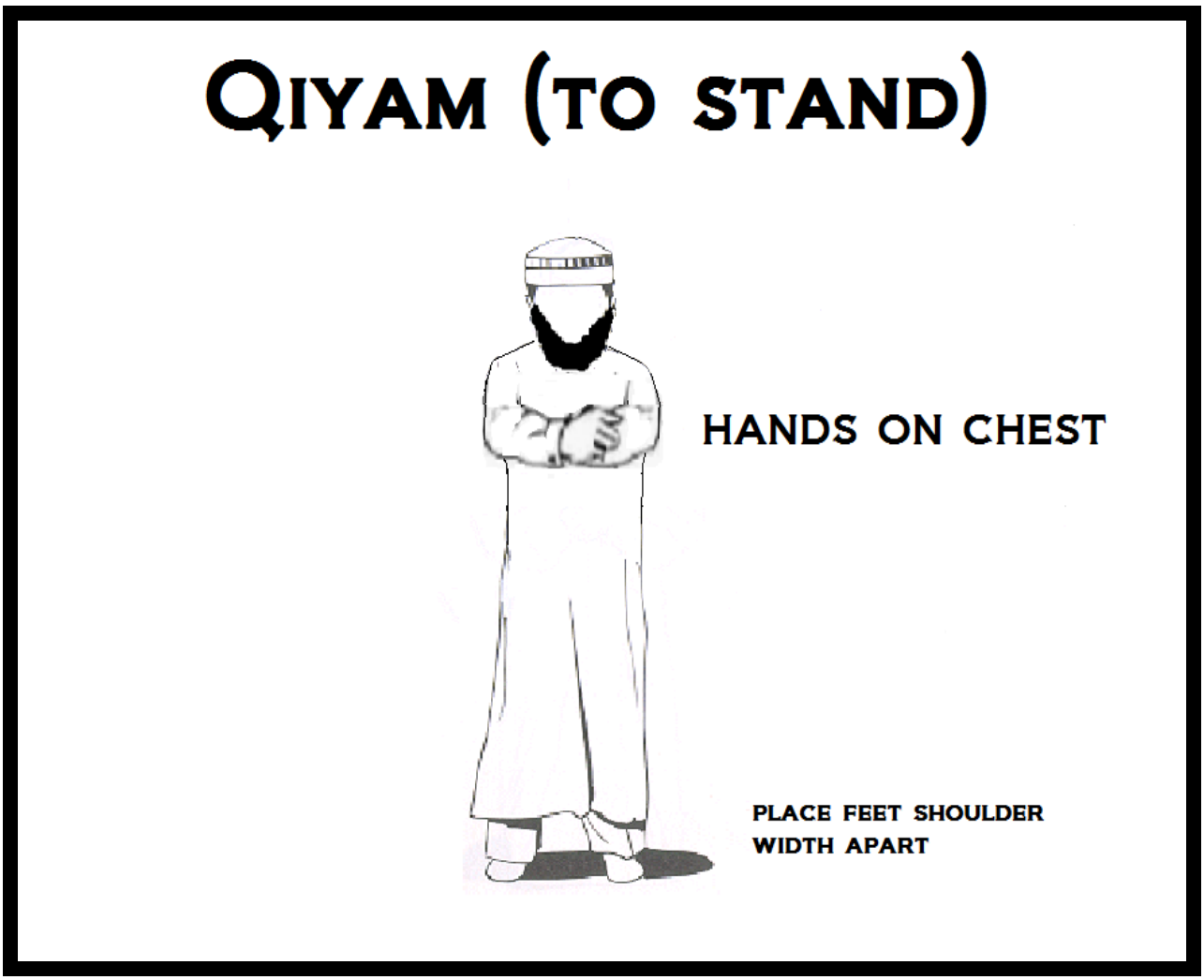
Qiyam (to stand)


QIYAM (TO STAND)
PLACE FEET SHOULDER WIDTH APART
AFTER SAYING THE OPENING TAKBIR, PLACE THE RIGHT HAND OVER THE LEFT FOREARM WHILE STANDING IN THE QIYAM POSITION; THEN RECITE SURAH AL-FATIHAH

Immediately after reciting the first takbir, a Muslim performing salat is permitted to engage in the qiyam position by folding their arms with the palm of the right hand being placed over the left wrist/forearm, in an area ranging from either directly on top of the chest down to slightly below the navel. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Sahl bin Sa'd narrated: "**The people were ordered to place the right hand on the left forearm in the prayer. Abu Hazim said, 'I knew that the order was from the Prophet.'**"



Furthermore, in a hadith collected by Abu Dawud, Tawus reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) used to place his right hand on his left hand, then he folded them strictly on his chest in prayer**."



However, another narration in the collection of Abu Dawud that was narrated by Abu Hurayrah reports: "**(The established way of folding the hands is) to hold the hands by the hands (right holding left) in prayer below the navel**."

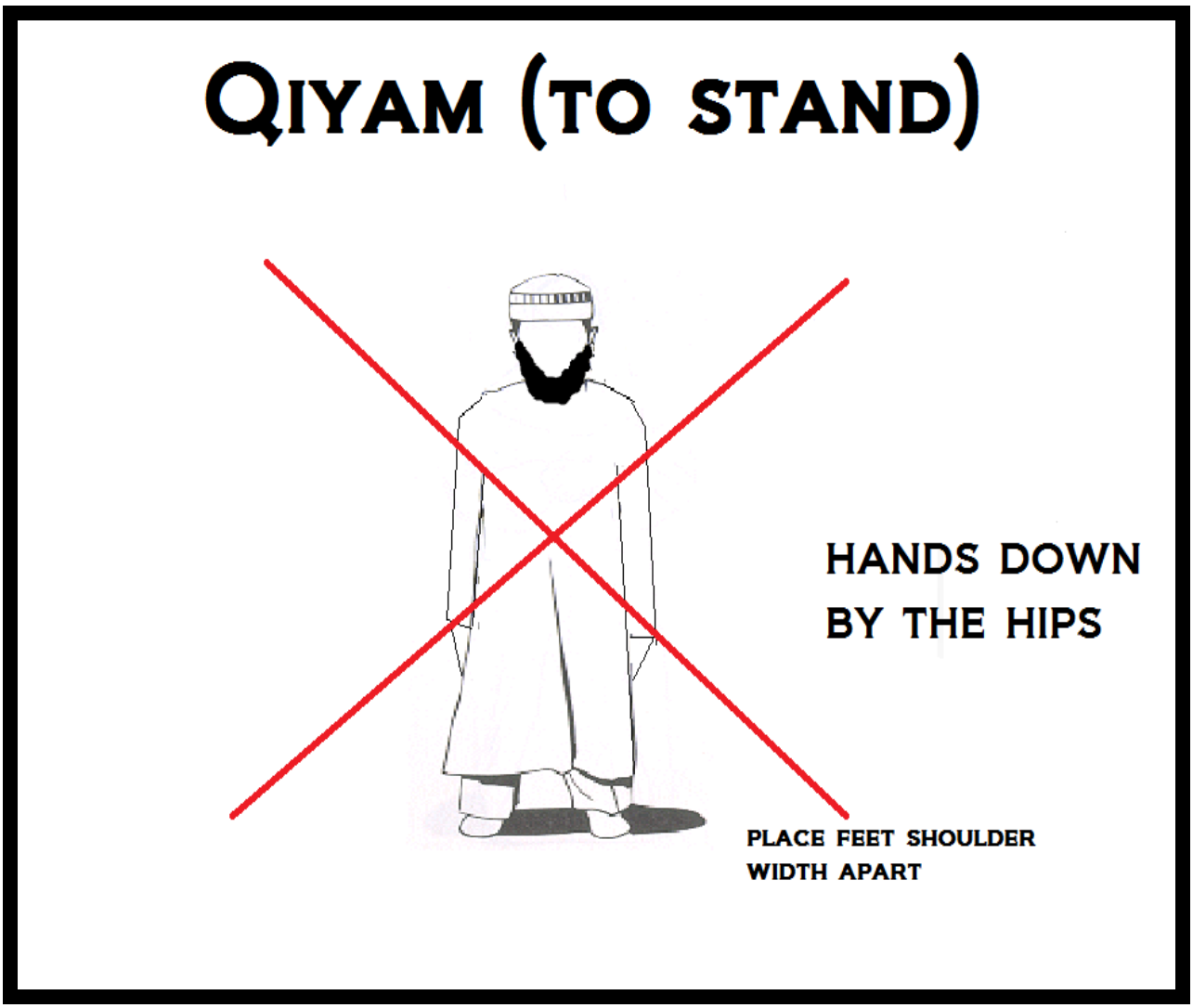
QIYAM (TO STAND)

HANDS FOLDED
BELOW THE NAVEL

PLACE FEET SHOULDER
WIDTH APART

Therefore, in order to avoid engaging into petty bickering over which method is ideal, one can merely comply with the directive in Surah Al-Fatihah of the Quran and follow the siratul mustaqim (the straight path; i.e., the middle course), by placing the right hand over the left forearm which will basically force one's hands to be positioned in an area below the chest and above the navel.

It is also important to note that in a hadith collected by Abu Dawud, Abu Hurairah reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) prohibited putting one's hands on the hips during the salah**."



With this being said, it is important to note that the late Imam Malik (RA) who was documented as having prayed with his hands down by his hips, did so as a result of injuries which prevented him from folding his arms during the salat.

Placement of the hands according to the four main schools of thought:

Hanafi

The author of al Durr al Mukhtaar, explaining the Hanafi position says: 'For men the hands should be below the navel.' (The Hanafi Madhab maintains that the males should place their right hand over the left and place them below the navel and the females should put their hands on the chest.)

Maliki

Imam Malik رحمه الله has three narrations: 1) Not fastening the hands at all but letting them hang at the sides. This is the most famous ruling of his madhab. 2) A choice of fastening or letting them hang at the sides. 3) Placing the hands above the navel but below the chest.

Shafi'i

The Shafi'i Madhab maintains that the folded hands should be placed above the navel but below the chest. Furthermore, Imam Nawawi discusses this in his commentary of Imam Muslim saying, 'This is the better known ruling of our Madhab.' He also states in Sharh al Muhaddhab, 'He should place them below his chest and

above his navel. This is the correct and clear ruling (of our school).' Furthermore, Imam Shafi'i rehto owt sah osla رحمه الله narrations but they are not well known: below the navel and on the chest. (The Shafi'i Madhab maintains that both males and females should place their right palms on the back of their left hands and place them above the navel but below the chest, as it is the Sunnah.)

Hanbali

Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal's رحمه الله view is that that the folded hands should be fastened below the navel. This is his most famous narration and is adopted by virtually all the hanbali ulama. (The Hanbalis' are of the view that both the males and the females should put their right palms on the back of their left hands and place them below the navel.)

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